

Application No.: 09/890,575
Reply to Office action of December 9, 2003

Remarks

Claims 1-49 are pending in this application. Claims 4-18 and 20-49 are allowed. Claims 1-3 and 19 stand rejected. The following remarks are addressed to the referenced paragraphs of the Office Action dated December 9, 2003.

Specification

Applicants acknowledge the request to provide an abstract for the disclosure in the current Official Office Action dated December 9, 2003, (Paper No. 12). The abstract as required by 37 CFR 1.72(b) is provided in the present amendment. Applicants would like to indicate, that the abstract was previously provided on September 22, 2003, as requested in the Official Office Action dated July 9, 2003 (Paper No. 10).

Claim Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (e)

Claims 1-3 and 19 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e), as being anticipated by Ichiya (5,544,001). Claims 1-3 and 19 have been canceled rendering their rejection moot.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants gratefully acknowledge the allowance of claims 4-18 and 20-49.

Reasons for Allowance

Applicants object to the statement of reasons for allowance to the extent that it unnecessarily limits the scope of the allowed claims. While Applicants agree that each allowed claim includes one or more features not disclosed or suggested by the cited references,

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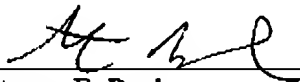
Applicants do not agree with the statement to extent that the invention is considered as a list of features and does not consider the invention as a whole.

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Conclusion

For all of the foregoing reasons and in view of the foregoing amendments, Applicants respectfully contend that the application is now in condition for allowance. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request entry of the foregoing amendments, allowance of claims 4-18 and 20-49, and issuance of Letters Patent for the subject invention. Please charge any additional requisite fees relating to this amendment and response to Deposit Account No. 50-1581.

Respectfully submitted,



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